

Montana FSA Reorganization Plan

Sanders County Profile

1) Proposed Consolidation

It is proposed that the Sanders County Office at Plains, Montana be closed and the workload and staff consolidated into the Lake County Office in Ronan, Montana.

2) General Description of County

Sanders is a small one-person shared management office in Plains with approximately 218 active FSA clients. Sanders is a medium sized county in western Montana with 83% of its farmland in pasture and woodlands and a little over 15% in cropland. Sanders ranks 49th in livestock production and 52nd in small grains production in the state. Sanders had 64 DCP and 0 CRP contracts in 2005.

Both Sanders and Lake County partially lie within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation. The tribal headquarters are at Pablo, Montana, 6 miles from the proposed consolidated office at Ronan, Montana.

2) County Statistics

- Number of producers 130 Percent of State .5%
- Producer Payments \$441,040 Percent of State .12%
- Number of employees 1

(Note: Number of Producers and payments derived from 2005 CCC-1099 data)

- Cost to benefits ratio .261

(Note: This represents the administrative cost in dollars to deliver one dollars worth of benefits in the county office)

3) Destination County: Lake County (Ronan)

- Ronan is 59 miles from the Sanders County (Plains) FSA office
- Workload - Due to the distances from other FSA county offices it is anticipated the majority of the producers will travel to the Ronan Office for FSA programs
- Employees – there is one employee assigned to the Plains office. That employee will be reassigned to the Lake County office.

4) Makeup of Receiving County

The receiving office (Ronan, Lake County), upon implementation of the plan will be composed of one 3-5 member Area Committee, one County Executive Director and 3 Program Technicians.

5) Travel impact on producers

- Included is a map of the proposed combination to include Sanders and Lake Counties. The map shows the approximate number and locations of producers in Sanders County. . Producers numbers on this map may be different than the producer numbers above, due to using 2001-2006 as the base years for this figure.

This will include all producers visiting the office, and would also include EQIP and disaster applications. FSA no longer has responsibility for EQIP.

- Sanders had 130 1099's in 2005. The Lake office is 59 miles from the Sanders office. At least 50% of the producers in Sanders county will be faced with the additional 59 miles to the Lake office. However, the remainder of the producers live between the two offices and will have less than the 59 additional miles to travel. Some living closer to the Lake office will actually have less distance to travel to the consolidated office. In addition, it is likely some in the Southern part of the county will chose to travel to the Missoula office.

6) Specialized Service Needs/Outreach

An integral part of the Montana FSA Reorganization Plan is to streamline or change business practices focused at requiring less visits, on the part of the producer, to the county office to do business with FSA. These changes will be implemented in all counties within the state with the intent to make participation for all producers easier and more efficient. In addition to those initiatives, FSA will reach out to communities where the closure of an office burdens producers with excessive distances to travel to the nearest FSA office. This outreach effort may include, sign-up meetings where the producer will be able to signup with an FSA official in the producer's own community, informational meeting in the outlying communities, office days in the outlying communities during implementation of the plan, or 1-800 numbers installed in the FSA office.

One of the focuses of the public meetings to be held will be to solicit ideas from producers how FSA can best meet their needs on an ongoing basis.

